

U1.3 - Writing response

In this week's essay, I would like to explore the different literary styles of writing utilized in Raymond Queneau's excerpts from *Exercises essay* to reinterpret the content of Hito Steyerl's *In Defense of the Poor Image*. First, I would like to go over a short introduction of what I understand about these two essays before proceeding with the interpretation.

In Hito Steyerl's *In Defense of the Poor Image*, the author discusses the significance of the 'poor image' in society. The author suggests that 'poor image' often refers to compressed, segmented at a low rate, and fragmented, unlike the beautiful, high-resolution images that first appeared more aesthetically pleasing and artistically appealing. Poor images' nowadays often involve the existence of emoticons and pirate websites, which can be edited and changed at will. In contrast, the status of 'poor image' will be lowered gradually and become a poor image after being altered repeatedly. The author also mentions that the 'poor image' can be edited and changed. Similarly, the author also mentions that the 'poor image' has been a great help to the development of the times, as people can access these images more efficiently and change the meaning of the images by editing them over and over again to convey their thoughts and opinions, which in turn provides more opportunities for the ordinary people to communicate with each other and learn about the society, stimulating the development of the society. This aspect also gave civilians more opportunities to speak and understand society, stimulating its development.

Raymond Queneau, excerpts from *Exercises in Style*, is a book about Queneau's use of 99 Chinese literary expressions to relay a straightforward story: an argument between two people over who stepped on whose toes first. This lack of substance leads Queneau to repeatedly explore how words can be interpreted in various linguistic contexts. The methods of interpretation are notation, double entry, litotes, metaphorical, retrograde, and surprise.

In the subsequent reinterpretation, I will choose Metaphorically and Surprise from Raymond Queneau, excerpts from *Exercises in Style* to paraphrase Hito Steyerl's *In Defense of the Poor Image*. Image" by Hito Steyerl.

Metaphorically: after the departure of the chef of a bakery, his once cherished towel is thrown out on the street by the other guys in disgust. The towel, which once held an essential place in the bakery, was slowly transformed into a stained rag by the footprints and ruts of people on the street, floating in the wind, which a hen picked up and made into a warm blanket for her chicks. The chicks would always fight with each other for the old rag, but the mother hen would always sit in the dark alley late at night and sew with other fabrics she found. When a storm came, the rag fell onto a pole, and the pigeons picked it up

and found that it was just a piece of ordinary rag that could not be ordinary anymore, and then they threw it in the air. With the wind constantly floating around, the rag is worn out and slowly falls to the sea surface; the fish will occasionally wake up to pull these "strange things", but when they lose interest, they will slowly leave. The smelly rag just drifted in the sea until it reached another place.

(Towel/rag = poor image, hen/pigeon/fish = changing image by the crowd, leaving a trail)

SURPRISE: This is baffling. Can you believe it! The image was supposed to be beautifully hung in the middle of an opulent castle, but now it has become so low! There is no high-definition resolution¹ of an electronic image that has been repeatedly squeezed and altered! Even! It's even been re-altered and put on pirate sites! Isn't this the fall of an exquisite work of art? But you would never have guessed! It's unbelievable that even such a lowly image could gain so much attention! What could such an image be used for? A poster for the opening of an art museum? Of course not! It's a way for civilians to get their point across and establish communication! Indeed! It's not uncommon for civilians to have access to such objects at their fingertips! With the spread of the poor image, communication has become easier! Change! Copy! Compress! Could there be a more casual and convenient way to distribute content? No more! The poor image is slowly eating away at our world!

Reference List:

Steyerl, H. (2012) *In Defense of the Poor Image*.

Queneau, R. (1947) *Exercises in Style*.